The Suffering of Experience

One visitor could see that Shri Maharaj was quite uneasy, obviously suffering the effects of cancer which had attacked his throat some time ago. He had not complained about any suffering except to say that he could not, at that juncture, explain the finer points of metaphysics at the length and depth which he would have liked to, because of a lack of physical stamina. He could and would talk rather briefly and visitors would have to listen very intently, with discrimination and with that special receptivity which would enable them to grasp the true meaning of what he has to convey between the lines and beyond the words! He said that this was in a way quite appropriate and that it was indeed right and proper that his words should be few and accurate because only those people would be 'directed' to his place who were both intelligent and were seeking Truth: it should not be made so easy and so clear to understand that they did not have to use any discrimination and intelligence at all — it will lose its value!!

One of the visitors that morning was so moved by the weakness and physical pain that was so very clear in Shri Maharaj's face that she felt constrained to ask Shri Maharaj: I am terrified not by the fear of death but by the fear of physical pain. Please tell me how can I get rid of that fear?

Shri Maharaj laughed and said, "I am afraid I cannot keep you there but I am sure there are many people who are trained and qualified to deal with the avoiding and lessening of physical pain by various methods. All I can do is explain to you what suffering itself is and who suffers.

"You must always go to the root of the problem. When did the experience of suffering first start? Do you have any memory of any suffering a hundred years ago? When did the experience start? Think about it deeply so that the answer to these questions arises within yourself without any words. Is life - living itself - other than experiencing? Experiencing in duration: one moment to the next moment stretched horizontally? And what is experiencing? Is it not reacting to an outside stimulus, which is interpreted through the senses as pleasant and acceptable, or, unpleasant and not acceptable. One does not experience suffering - one suffers an experience, pleasant or unpleasant.

"Now the basic and essential question so far as I am concerned is: who - or, more appropriately, what - is it that suffers an experience? Let me tell you straightaway: 'I' do not - cannot - suffer any experience, pleasant or unpleasant; it is only a 'you' or a 'me' who suffers an experience. This is a very important sentence and you should ponder very deeply and very quietly on it.

"I should like to leave you there to stew in your own juice, to work out the problem - or rather to let the problem work itself out! But let us proceed. 'I' cannot suffer any experience because I am pure subjectivity without the slightest trace of objectivity, and only an object can suffer. A 'me' or a 'you' is an object and therefore suffers experience; also, like any other object, a 'me' or a 'you' can have no substance and, therefore, can 'exist' only as a concept in consciousness. Further, therefore, it can only be consciousness which can suffer because any reaction to an a stimulus which is what experiencing, can only take place through consciousness. Indeed, therefore, consciousness and the suffering are identical, not different in any way.

"You will find it difficult to grasp what

I say because you have identified yourself with the body, the psycho-somatic apparatus through which the experience is suffered, the instrument on which the suffered experience is registered. You have lost your identity with the pure subjectivity, the Absolute that you are truly, and falsely identified yourself with the objective 'me' — therefore you say "I suffer", therefore you are "bound".

"Do you understand what I have been saying? I am aware of my true identity as the intemporality, infinity, subjectivity, therefore I do not suffer. I am aware that it is consciousness that apparently suffers experience through the sensorial apparatus. You, on the other hand, believe that you are the sensorial apparatus and it is this mistaken identity of yours that is the cause of your suffering, and your bondage.

"As long as there is consciousness functioning, keeping the sensorial apparatus working, so there will also be living, experiencing, suffering-positive or negative. But you-as-I'll are only the witnessing of it all. All functioning is the objective expression of what-I-Am — and every sentient being can say this.

In ~~He~~ It state of perfection, total awareness,
~~He~~ It is unaware of ~~his~~ its awareness;
Then consciousness ~~bliss~~ #
~~and comes to out into~~
Into a moan of Ahh.
~~He~~ It is conscious of BEING -
~~He~~ It exults in ~~his~~ its beingness.
~~He is~~ Immersed in the Love of I-AM-ness.
~~He~~ It expresses ~~himself~~ itself in duality.

Through union of two aspects Male-Female,
Through the five elements #
Space - Air - Fire - Water and Earth,
Through the three Gunas ##
Sattva - Rajas - Tama -
~~He~~ It manifests ~~himself~~ itself in duration.

In dreamed space-time
~~He~~ It manifests as phenomena,
Creating millions of forms,
Breathing ~~it~~ into them the life force
and the all pervading ~~I~~ immanent consciousness;
Through time forms, in joyous self-love
~~He is~~ functioning ~~of~~ of consciousness as Pradnya.

The ~~various~~ sentient beings, mere ~~forms~~ images, ~~in~~
Thus conceived - wonder of wonders! -
perceive one another as objects,
assuming subjectivity for oneself,
Each, in magnificent illusion,
sees ~~himself~~ itself as an entity separate,
with judgment and volition independent.

He forgets his unlimited potential
as Nonmenal Absolute, ~~and~~ accepts
His limited identity as an appearance,
a mere phenomenon;
Takes delivery of ~~Pradnyaa~~ the functioning of Pradnyaa
As his own personal actions,
Binds himself in illusory bondage, —
And 'suffers'!

Comes then, the merciful Guru,
Full of Grace and Light divine,
And shows him what it really is —
That which he thinks he is:
Nothing more than the speck of sperm
~~that got~~ impregnated in the mother's womb,
In which is latent the Light of sentience,
I-Am-ness, the Consciousness that He is.

Given names in thousands,
Rama, Krishna, Eashwara, Brahman,
The same I-Am-ness it is;
The light of Consciousness, Maha-Maya,
In magnificent illusion, blinds
Its own nature and leads itself astray,
Until the Guru says: Halt, see yourself
As you are, in your true Glory.

On your original state as timeless,
absolute nonmenality, has appeared
Like this temporary illusory body-cum-consciousness,
Spontaneously, sans cause or reason,
~~that will function~~ as part of Pradnyaic functioning.
functioning ~~working~~ It works out its allotted duration —
until, just as spontaneously it disappears —
and consciousness, ~~too~~, merges consciously,
~~No one is born no one dead~~
Merges in Awareness — no one born, no one dead.

Says Nisarga Datta Maharaj
In terms, simple and direct:
~~The Guru's advice is simple and direct:~~
What were you before you acquired the body?
Go back to the source; be still, and then
will the seeker disappear and merge
into the seeking merge, - ~~I AM~~, ~~but~~
No longer aware of awareness, in
wholeness, in unicity, without duality.
I AM.

~~Says~~ With insight and intuition, with
deep conviction, simple to apprehend,
THIS-THAT-IS is beyond the bounds of intellect.
Only the objective and the phenomenal -
presence or absence - can the intellect grasp.
But ~~WHAT~~-I-AM is neither presence nor absence;
absence of the presence of presence,
absence of the presence of absence.
IS WHAT-I-AM
~~Beyond - prior to - space~~